Cambridgeshire Parish Pumps 1897-1990

Some newspaper reports from the *Cambridgeshire Scrapbook 1897-1990*
Compiled by Mike Petty. 2022 07 19

These are summaries of some of the newspaper stories mentioning water pumps in various villages that appeared in the Cambridge Daily News and other Cambridgeshire papers. I have copies of the full articles indicated with a date code YY-MM-DD

1897 05 21 c
At Ely Urban District Council meeting a number of cases of waste water, defective cisterns and sanitary defects were reported. The pump at ***Queen Adelaide***, which had been put out of order through mischievous boys putting stones in, had been repaired at a cost of £2. Warning notices had been put up.

1897 11 05
At St Ives rural district council meeting Mr Barlow said that the ***Fenstanton*** pump was only about eight feet from the pond and every time cattle or horses went to the pond the water was stirred up and became black, and this water found its way into the well. If they cleaned out the well a dozen times they would never made him believe the water in that well would be good because the water would percolate through to the well

1898 08 12
St Ives public pump

1898 09 17
At an inquiry at St Ives the East Hunts Water Company said that for several days there was no supply to the taps. If they erected stand pipes it would be detrimental to their company as their 116 customers would go to the stand pipe for their drinking supply and use other water for cleaning purposes. The medical officer of health said that the pumps had been closed in 1893 as they were polluted with sewage and notices placed on the pumps would be insufficient to prevent people drinking the water. The Vicar said the river was so low that it had prevented a large number of persons from getting the water from the river for sanitary purposes

1899 01 14
Sir - I should like to know how it is the children who come over a mile to ***Girton*** School cannot be provided with a little water to drink, as there is a well and a pump not 50 yards from the school doors. Some of the cottagers compare its water to Monkey Brand soap - it is not fit to wash clothes. If you put it in a copper and boil it there is a scum like yeast. It is no use letting the water be consumed and disease spread – Neptune

1899 03 07
At a meeting at ***Girton*** for electing parish councillors the schoolmaster raised the question of the parish pump and remarked that the state of affairs with regard to the water supply was disgraceful, more than one-third of the houses having either no water supply or water unfit to drink and as the council had taken no steps to remedy the matter they were guilty. Cries of "Puppy soup", "Cesspool drainings" etc were frequently heard

1899 09 20
Newmarket RDC heard that at ***Landwade*** there was a pump that had been erected by subscription, the piping had never been properly fixed and there was now a leakage. Complaints were made as to the indifferent water supply at Reach. There was a spring of good water near the Delph Bridge, which by reason of its being open was often full of tadpoles and other little animals. If a cover were put over it would be a good source of water. The inhabitants of ***Kirtling*** obtained a great deal of their water from a dirty pond. The water to certain homes in Soham was filled with dead cats.

1900 02 19
A fire occurred in the shop used as a general stores for the grocery and drapery business of Mr R.A. Waddelow of ***Waterbeach***. An assistant, Mr Albert Denson slept upon the premises and was awakened by a choking sensation. Fortunately there was a pump and a supply of pails handy and two young men, one with no shoes on and the other in his socks, commenced pouring water through the window on to the burning material underneath. For a quarter of an hour they laboured with a will

before assistance was forthcoming. There is no organised fire brigade in the village, but there is a fire engine which was out of order at the time of the outbreak

1900 07 14
Sir – The birds of prey watching the interest of the East Hunts Water Company have made another pounce and seized the Star Yard pump at ***St Ives***. A large number of persons who have been using this really good supply of water will have their supply cut off. A lad has been found to have diphtheria, and of course it must be this Star Yard pump, while the fact that a child died from the same disease in Filbert's Walk, where the East Hunts water is laid on, is entirely ignored! When all the pumps have been closed by the minions we shall be obliged to use the river, although it has just now a wonderful stench which that august body does not seem to trouble about – Ratepayer

1900 07 25 c
Sir – Respecting the Star Yard pump at ***St Ives***. I have drunk its water for many years and never heard the purity doubted before. It has always been the best, or as good as any in the town & it is a shame that the users should be deprived of the water unless by the inexorably exigencies of the health of the public warrant such a privation. If I know anything of my neighbours I believe they would rather have had their parish church seized and closed than their pump – Another Ratepayer

1903 09 19

Threshing operations had been in progress in a field in North End when the men went for breakfast leaving only the engineer sitting on his engine in the field. While they were at breakfast Mr Watson noted fire smoke and flames coming from the stacks only a short distance from the engine. The alarm was at once given but soon massive flames fanned by a strong wind were carrying sparks across the road where an unoccupied cottage was soon alight. Fire quickly spread to another and it was fortunate that the wind remained in the southeast for had it changed the whole street of lathe and plaster cottages would have been destroyed. The Burwell Fire Brigade with their little antique manual engine stuck manfully to their task but the small quantity of water they were able to throw was totally inadequate to cope with the flames. The water had to be procured from the village pumps about 75 yards away, carried in buckets and poured into the engine from which it was pumped on the cottage. With the arrival of the Fordham Brigade with a few men the Burwell men transferred their attention to the stacks. Newmarket Engine arrived an hour and a half after the call by which time all the danger had disappeared. Two cottages were totally destroyed together with stacks and a few old farm buildings. 03 09 19

1904 03 31
Sir – I must protest against the sanitary inspector's report on the pump on ***Barrington*** green. All the people living near it and having horses use it and have done so since the year dot. The water is not any worse now than it was then. If the inspector were to visit some of the cottages and make the owners keep them in a thoroughly sanitary condition, instead of trying to upset old customs, it would be better for the village. But there is the old story, 'I must not upset my masters', who are generally the owners – A Villager

1905 05 13
Residents in ***Soham*** have to 'fetch a pail of water' from the public pump when they need it. But Mrs Brown of Bushel Lane complained: "It was a great trial to me. My back was so weak that carrying the pails would send pains through it of an excruciating character. It was when my first girl was born that I became so very ill. She was a very weakly baby and fretted continually. I became so knocked-up

that I had to have someone in to do my housework. One night my husband returned to find me in a pitiable plight. Then I decided to take Dr William's Pink Pills and I have not been ill since". 05 05 13

1908 11 20
Following a complaint that water could not be got from the pump between the Red Lion and the allotments at ***Cheveley***, Mr Graystone went to investigate. The source of supply was a field fifty yards away where he found an offensive-looking pond. The water was an inky colour and covered with green duckweed. It looked altogether horrible. There were lots of rats living in the pond. But the water was not meant for drinking; it was just for slopping purposes and there should be a notice to that effect. There had never been a case of typhoid arising from it. CWN 08 11 20

1909 06 25
The pump in Middle Watch, ***Swavesey*** is in a worse condition than ever. It used to be necessary to put down water (obtained from a pond or water butt) once a day to induce the bucket to act; now water has to be poured down each time it is used. This disregard of the health and convenience of residents seems inexplicable and the council should act. 09 06 25

1909 07 02
Swavesey pump – 09 07 02

1909 08 20
Boxworth boys thought drowned in pond, village pump out of order – CWN 09 08 20

1910 08 26
Longstanton cottagers living in the vicinity of the public pump known locally as "Chapman's" have a grievance. There is another a pump on private property close by, fed from the same public supply and when there is a heavy call on this (it is used to fill a tank about three times a week) the yield from "Chapman's" is very scanty indeed. Both parties claim priority of usage and neither is inclined to give way. If the council want to avoid unpleasantness they should step in now 10 08 26d

1910 09 02
Longstanton water pump problems – 10 09 02e

1911 09 15
The want of water is being seriously felt in ***Swavesey***. All the ponds are practically dry and private pumps are running short. Several farmers have had the new water supply laid on to their yards and fields, and have derived great benefit thereby. The public pumps of the old water supply, hitherto only allowed to be drawn upon for domestic purposes, have been used for farm purposes and have allowed many farmers to obtain water for stock which otherwise have to have been fetched from the river. 11 09 15e

1911 12 29
Two Fen Ditton labourers were charged with stealing a lead pump. John Thornton of ***Quy*** Water Farm said it had been taken from his yard. He went to a marine store dealer's on East Road and there saw the pump cut up in lengths. The dealer said he'd bought it from a man who said it was of no more use. The accused admitted the theft but claimed they'd been drunk at the time and dare not take it back. They recompensed the farmer for its loss. 11 12 29a

1912 01 26
The question of providing an adequate water supply to rural areas is attracting a great deal of attention. One cottage at ***Caxton*** stood a quarter of a mile from the village pump and, except for the rain water caught from the roof, they had to carry every drop of water from the pump. The family was a large one and they did their own laundry work, so one could guess how many journeys would be made in the course of a week in the hot, dry weather. Yet they refused to have water laid on and the

Parish Meeting had unanimously opposed a supply. However it was the District, not the Parish Council, who was responsible. Old prejudices are deep rooted and a rural population notoriously slow in absorbing a new idea. If they neglected their duty the Medical Officer would bring pressure to bear on them. 12 01 26 d & e & h

1913 01 03 CIP
Mepal parish pump in bad condition

1913 08 29
Prickwillow water main would be laid along the north side of Prickwillow Bank with water tanks and pumps. But the source of supply – somewhere up the River Lark – was unreliable owing to the varying condition of the water and the cost was a good deal more than expected. About 120 children attended Prickwillow school and had no water except what the schoolmaster carried there. Village water contained microbes and smelt very bad but bread was made with it 13 08 29 p7 CIP

1913 10 24
Longstanton residents complained about their water. Fifteen people used a pump fed by water from a spring which required cleaning out. They had to go half-a-mile to obtain drinking water from a public supply 13 10 24 p7 CIP

1913 12 05 CIP
Lt Downham pump

1914 01 30
It is not surprising that the bad example set by the militant suffragists should incite young village people to mischievous pranks. 'Votes for Women' decorate the rail of a bridge on the road to Milton. Now daubs of black discovered on property at ***Landbeach*** would lead one to think that supporters of the feminist cause had been paying a visit. Great annoyance has been caused by the smearing of gates and walls with tar. The iron gates leading into the churchyard have been freely daubed and users of the village pump have, on seizing the handle, found it black and sticky. But the acts have been traced to two lads of previous good character 14 01 30j

1914 05 22
Sir – our village pump, the main water supply for Fen Drayton, has been out of order for two months. In order to get water a pailful carried from home or taken from the polluted brook close by, as to be poured down. We do not know who is responsible for the pump but we hope that if attention is called in the 'News' the Council concerned will have the defect remedied without delay – Correspondent. 14 05 22i

1914 06 12
A new pump has just been placed on the Orwell Road at ***Barrington*** by Mr Edward Conybeare who has always taken a great interest in the water supply of the village. Residents in the lower part have hitherto been obliged to go some distance for their water. The pump is the fourth and finest that he has presented to the village. Constructed by Mr H. Newton of Regent Street, Cambridge, it is of lead with a case of oak. Thee is a rest for buckets under the spout and the water drains off into a ditch near by

1914 12 18
A fountain in the ditch by the side of the main road at ***Harston*** was originally intended to supply six houses adjacent, but two cottages on the other side of the road and some cottages further away have

been in the habit of obtaining water from it. The supply has now failed but the erection of a pump would probably produce a good supply

1921 04 15 ES
Stretham housing complaint – water had to be fetched from farm 200 yards away; to tell contractor install pump for well immediately, p8

1924 02 02
An inquiry was held into establishing a water supply for Dullingham, Brinkley and Burrough Green. In normal times the supply of water to ***Brinkley*** was sufficient for their needs. But there was only one pump and in dry seasons the people had to go very early in the morning and wait a long time.
Mrs Webb of ***Dullingham***, said they had not been able to get enough water to wash their clothes, and she could not fancy drinking it after she saw a rat going into the well.

The Rector of ***Burrough Green*** considered the proposal absurd. There was no public water supply. The majority of the cottages were owned by absolutely poor people, everybody was jolly hard up, and now was not the time to put a large expense for a useless object on the backs of the ratepayers.

1924 04 11
Newmarket Rural Council heard that Messrs Lack and sons had completed the boring of the well at ***Reach***, and the water had been analysed and found fit for drinking purposes. It was recommended that the mayor of Cambridge be asked to declare the pump open when he attends to open the Reach fair

1924 05 27
At ***Reach*** fair, in accordance with custom, the mayor and members of the corporation forsook their dignity and became boys (and one girl) again. Following the official proclamation the mayor (H.B. Bailey) performed the opening ceremony of the new village pump. His worship pumped the first jug of water and quaffed off, or rather sipped suspiciously the first glass of it. Following luncheon the mayor repaired to the field and commenced an onslaught on the coconuts. First blood in this respect was drawn by the Chief Constable but the Borough Coroner contrived to "wangle" three with one throw. The more sedate members of the corporation contented themselves with the roundabouts

1925 10 30
Chesterton RDC was told that it was very well supplied with water but five parishes had no public pumps, three had private supplies and one relied upon artesian wells where they had 13 wells continuously running. They should take powers to prevent that water running to waste. At ***Stapleford*** the council had bought land for the erection of houses but the Cambridge Water Company area did not include the village and although the main passed in front of the land they had no right to supply water.

1926 08 12
A woman was fined 5s for breaking bylaws under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1885. She owned land at ***Clavering*** occupied by caravan dwellers. There was no supply of drinking water and the sanitary arrangements consisted of four posts driven into the ground and covered with sacking. There was a stream of running water which was fit for washing and making tea, but unfit for drinking; if necessary drinking water could be obtained from the village pump, half-a-mile away.

1927 02 11
The water supply for ***Haddenham***, ***Stretham*** and ***Little Thetford*** was practically all derived from surface wells; they were all contaminated and the water derived from them was in every case unfit for drinking purposes, an Inquiry was told. Analysis from Haddenham, where there were eight wells - six public and two private - were all highly polluted: they all contained organic matter. Only one which came from a deeper well at Hinton Hall was satisfactory. A member of Haddenham Parish Council asked if two of the samples were taken from Wolden Well and from outside Mr C. Searle's house at

Hill Row. Would it be possible to find two pumps in the parish where you could get more impure water than from these pumps? These two wells should be filled up and two others dug with a pump further up the lane preventing any of the fluid coming from the farmyard into the well. Mr Porter said there had been no epidemics for 50 years and they had the biggest percentage of old age pensioners in the area. Mr A.E. Wright of Haddenham said he had lived in the village for 30 years and considered the water supply fairly good. He objected to the scheme on economic grounds: the land was saddled with such a burden of taxation at the present time that amounted to £1 an acre and any additional burdens were almost impossible to bear. 10 out of 11 members of Haddenham parish council were against the scheme.
In Stretham three samples were taken, two from public pumps and one from a well which supplied the council houses. The sample from the public pump in Top Street showed a very bad analysis. The water was polluted with sewage and unfit for drinking purposes. The other one, taken from a pump near the school, was satisfactory, the water was unpolluted and fit for consumption. The sample from the Council Houses well was also satisfactory and fit for use. 25 people had signed a petition for water but half wished they had not done so
A sample from a well near the school at Little Thetford showed it was contaminated and unfit for drinking purposes. There had been no epidemics but the present supply was a real danger to people. Wilburton enjoyed an unlimited supply of water of its own. There were upwards of 100 houses there every one of which had its own supply. – 27 02 11 ES

1927 07 07
Eight people were rendered homeless as a result of a fire which involved two old-fashioned cottages in High Street ***Waterbeach***. They were built of brick and plaster with a galvanised iron roof over thatch. In one, containing five rooms, a pantry and a wash house lived Mr & Mrs Cudworth and their five children, while the adjoining cottage, occupied by Mrs Hole, consisted of four rooms. The Waterbeach Fire Brigade was soon on the scene but the supply of water from neighbouring pumps soon proved inadequate. Meanwhile a band of willing helpers assisted in removing furniture & some money which Mrs Hole kept upstairs

1928 03 30 ES
Stretham: Further improvements: road opposite the Cross widened down the street opposite the village pump where the old wall has been pulled down and a lower one built further back. The workmen will now start operations on J. Garner's shop, thus making the main road a safer thoroughfare for the ever-increasing amount of traffic passing through the village. W.S. Rayner was the contractor

1928 10 20
Swaffham Prior pump, p7

1929 03 30
Coun Rowley spoke of the serious pollution of Histon Brook. There was a stream of black sewage matter six inches deep. From this pollution he had lost two horses and another which was about to die and he had been put to very heavy expenditure for water. If water was taken from a pump at ***Cottenham*** fed by the brook it ate through the tubes in one hour. They should apply for an injunction against Messrs Chivers resulting in the stopping of the factory. But there were a large number of cottages, a large laundry and a butcher all discharging water into the brook crude, and not filtered as at Chivers. The pollution came from up the brook at Girton as well as lower down

1929 05 03 ES
Haddenham Mill End ratepayers request sewer; with regard to extension of water scheme – at Thetford have been considering scheme to get water from the river but Ministry would not sanction scheme. Was time something was done. Mr Kisby said he was frequently coming through ***Stretham*** where he saw boys, girls and women going about with pails carrying water from the pump. It was cruel to the women, the children and the housewife. At Wilburton every man had voted against the scheme – 29 05 03(2) ES

1929 09 27
Stretham: Drought problems … many wells have gone dry and only the largest ponds still retain a small quantity of drinking water. This lack of drinking water is causing great consternation and people are wondering whether the RDC will ever extend their main to the village. Whilst some still obtain a comparatively good supply from the village pump, others have to walk a considerable distance to get a pail full. The supply for animals is an acute problem, many have to cart water a distance of three or four miles. – 29 09 27(3) ES

1929 10 04
Stretham: Rain welcome – pump had gone dry in severe drought. Occasionally water is to be had from the pump which Ely RDC have decided to open four hours a day – 29 10 04(6) ES

1931 05 22
A ***Stapleford*** grocer was summoned for displaying verses in his shop window accusing a dairyman of adulterating his milk. One read 'Edgar had a little pump, With water soft as silk. And with the fluid from that pump, He used to mix his milk'. Crowds gathered to read them but nobody took them seriously. He claimed the milkman had broken the windows and threatened to wring his neck. 31 05 22 c & d

1934 09 06
At ***Castle Camps*** the population of 505 people depended on a deep well pump and it was very difficult to get water. It took about 170 turns to obtain two gallons from the pump and it was the only drinking water available. The situation has become worse recently because a lot of the shallow wells had dried up. The Parish Council suggested the District Council arrange a water cart three times a week. But they would charge a penny a bucket. 34 09 06

1934 09 14
Stretham Parish Council; deplorable condition of streets; pump in Top Street to be dismantled; to purchase Grunty Fen allotments; manure dump in Chapel Square to be removed, catchwater in Green End should be fenced as a danger 34 09 14(5)ES

1935 08 27
An 84-year-old ***Haslingfield*** man was summoned for assault. He had gone to the pump with his pail and told a group of youths that they had no business loitering there on a Sunday evening. Having filled his pail he deliberately poured some of the water down the back of one lad's legs, then shot the rest of the contents of the pail over him and starting swinging it round saying "I will cut your b--- head off". The old man said there'd been friction with members of the village Cricket Club who left their bicycles against his house. The lads had pulled his fence down as fast as he'd put it up but he'd driven them away with a coal hammer. The case was dismissed 35 08 27b

1937 19 20
Percy Salmon gave a lantern lecture on ***Melbourn*** to Cambridge Photographic Club. One drawback was a lack of water supply and this was a serious matter to a photographer. The method of washing slides at the village pump was slow, but healthy, while dangling them in the mill pond merely provided a free picture show for the stickleback, who ruin the slides by their curiosity and rubbed the gelatine off. He deplored the 'slum clearance fever' which has swept Melbourn. It has made the village more healthy but less picturesque and no longer a hunting ground for photography 37 10 20c

1939 01 03
Sir – ***Teversham*** people cannot understand why we are not going to be allowed to have electric light brought into our houses. Two years ago an inspector came and condemned our pumps and put up

notices saying ‘Not fit to drink’. Still we are waiting for the piped water supply. It seems as though the chief objection to electric light is against poles being stick up in the village. But what about the lovely-looking building on the corner of Teversham Road – a machine gun range. We are going to have all the noise from guns, aeroplanes etc but not a little comfort and cleaner water. – Lightwater 39 01 03

1939 01 27
Water protest. "A wanton waste of public money" was the phrase used in a resolution carried by a large majority at a crowded public meeting at ***Shepreth*** on Monday evening. The meeting was called to discuss the proposal of South Cambs. Rural District Council to supply the village with a main water supply. Of an attendance of between 90 and 100, only six voted against the resolution, which read as follows: That this meeting of local electors in the village of Shepreth wholeheartedly disapproves of the proposal put forward by the South Cambs. Rural District Council to supply the village with a main water supply as being utterly and entirely unnecessary and unwanted by the majority of residents of the village, and as being a wanton waste of public money. The Chairman (the Rev. C. J. Sharp) drew attention to the fact that there were three public pumps, many private pumps and that Shepreth always had a good supply of water. A remark came from the audience: "What we want is a scheme to get rid of water. We have enough as it is."

1939 11 22
During a very dry summer wells in ***Kennett*** run dry and people have to get water from their more fortunate neighbours. In the event of a fire a hose attached to an ordinary household pump would run the well dry in a very few minutes. At Kennett End there is a builder’s yard containing a large amount of timber with houses and a petrol pump close by. If fire broker out it would be difficult to deal with, villages said. But the water scheme was extravagant and there was a war on. 39 11 22c

1940 05 24
Roast Pork. Eleven fat pigs were roasted alive and 11 more were severely burnt that they had to be destroyed after fire had broken out in a piggery at ***Longstanton*** on Saturday night. Over 100 chicks were also destroyed. The sties were burnt to the ground. Two brooders - which are believed to have caused the fire - were similarly burnt out. The pigs were owned by Mr. Thomas Henry Hazel, a smallholder. Neighbours and police attempted to quell the outbreak by forming a bucket chain from nearby pumps to the scene of the blaze. Mr. Hazel opened the doors of the sties to let the pigs escape and when they were afterwards rounded up many were found to be too badly burned to live. The fire was first noticed about midnight by a railway signalman.

1940 08 23
The Village Pump, — A Ratepayer writes: The only public pump in the village (***Fen Drayton***) on which many inhabitants rely for water, has been out of order for the past three months, notwithstanding the fact that the attention of local representatives of the local authority responsible has been called to the matter, nothing has been done.

1949 05 25
When the custom of having a luncheon after the proclamation of ***Reach*** fair was revived on Monday, Counc G. Edwards recalled that 25 years ago the Mayor was a brewer and an additional ceremony he performed was the opening of a new village pump. This led him to remark that he did not quite understand why a brewer should be asked to open a pump; he could have understood it if a dairyman had been asked to perform the ceremony!

1949 12 12
About 16 years ago a house was built on the main Newmarket-Norwich road. It was to accommodate the ***Chippenham*** constable and was put there because the Home Office said they wanted police houses to be on the man road. The house was two miles from any village, had no water laid on (but had a pump from its own well), had no electricity and a sewerage system that was “a little bit ancient”. The constable who had been there a number of years had resigned and the Chief Constable

knew that whoever he ordered into the house would at once give notice to terminate his employment. Now the house is to be sold.

1951 03 23 ES
Stretham: Ely Road council houses resident discover the water pump situate in a small enclosure in one of the gardens had disappeared during the night. It had not been in use for some years. The high price paid for scrap made is supposed to be the reason for several being uprooted, some from fields where they were still needed for supplying drinking water to cattle

1952 07 18
Future of the parish pump; can parish councils protect old pumps. If a public water supply is introduced to a village, is the District Council able to dismantle and dispose of the parish pump? The ownership of pumps in many cases must have passed to the Parish Council from the Lord of the Manor, but each case may produce a different legal problem. It would be curious if they were unable to protect their parish pump even if only as a memorial to times past – 52 07 18(5)ES

1957 07 07
The water situation in ***Duxford*** is critical. Last year 40 of the 63 satisfactory wells dried up. Miss Harriet Hewitt, 74, says her well had dried up and she has to go to a pump 250 yards away to fetch water. Mrs Pamela James in St John's Street who has two small children has to get her water from a pump 200 yards from her home four times a day. The District Council says a piped supply from Dotterell Hall is expected in autumn. 57 07 07 & a

1958 05 02
Pampisford is to keep its parish pumps until they fall into a state of disrepair even after the village gets a mains water supply. Some people think the pump water is better water and there is a good supply. They were put in in comparatively modern times and are in good working order. They might be extremely useful should there be another war and bombs hit the mains. 58 05 02a

1959 05 29
The old public pump outside ***Whittlesford*** Guildhall is to be removed. It has recently become loose on its mountings and as the water was unfit, the expenditure on repairs would be unwarranted. Because there was a need for a public supply a standpipe will be erected pending the connection of various properties to the newly laid Council mains. 59 05 29

1961 11 11
Ten council houses in School Lane, ***Chittering***, are supplied by one water tap; tenants fetch water in buckets. They would welcome mains drainage and a water supply if they could afford it; photos of Mrs S. Peach pumping water and tipping it into sink from bowl – 61 11 11 CIP

1965 03 13
Melbourn old water pump discovered – 65 03 13a

1965 07 22
Willingham smallholders claim level of water in wells affected by water pumping, some wells have dried up – 65 07 22a

1976 05 20
Parish pumps are not a frequent topic of debate among parish councils. But **Girton** parish council not only discussed the parish pump – they actually had it in the committee room, a large, broken, rusty object dating from 1902. It had been stolen by two students and the well had been cemented over.

Now the police had recovered the pump. Members agree there was no point in replacing it and decided to give it to a collection of rural bye-gones.

1976 08 07
Ancient village pumps could creak back into action if the drought crisis deepens. The idea has been put forward by ***Pampisford*** parish council which has decided to call in experts to see if its own village pumps can be put into working order. There are probably more than 100 pumps in the district, many sadly neglected and dilapidated. Some date back around a hundred years and almost all are out of working order after falling into disrepair with the introduction of piped water supplies to the rural areas. Since local councils lost responsibility for water supplies there has been a long-running dispute about their ownership though there is usually a tremendous row if anybody wants to get rid of them.

LITTLEPORT WATER SUPPLY. UNLIMITED. A.D. 1908.
BLACK LAKE PUMP.
Mike Petty's Collection